

# FANTASY



# FANTASY—*A Poetry Quarterly*

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FOURTH YEAR

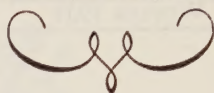
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS



We are proud to have had as judge of our current Sea contest Mr. Hervey Allen. And we'd like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation—and our readers'—of his readiness to read the entries in that contest, realizing as we do the many calls constantly made on his time. We fear we are sometimes likely to forget—in the light of his latest achievement—the books which first brought him critical acclaim, the Poe biography and the series of splendid poetry volumes. We suggest that others re-acquaint themselves with these books, as we have done.

Mr. Allen's choice in the contest fell to Lydia Kingsway of Philadelphia, whose poem faces this page.

David Cornel DeJong's *Sleep* contribution also appears in this issue. Mr. DeJong is from West Barrington, R. I.

Our next contest theme is decidedly different from any we have yet adopted. The poem in this case is to be a character piece, the entire poem of no more than thirty lines to deal with a single individual. A model might be Masters' *Spoon River* fragments, or the selections by Travis Tuck Jordan appearing in this issue. Entries should be in by March first, and may be either rhymed or free.



# SEA MOODS

LYDIA KINGSWAY

*Inscrutable alike in calm or rage;  
Twin cymbal to the music of the sky;  
Mutable, yet the same through every age  
That stemmed with the primordial urge to pry  
The continents apart with ponderous roll—  
Its roots in primal caves from pole to pole.*

*How many million suns have sucked it up,  
And spat it out again in protean form—  
And whether little fill the dying cup,  
Or much make tempest, never lost the norm—  
However small or distant one may be,  
It finds its home again within the sea.*

*It plays the siren to a certain race  
Of men, and is their captor to the last;  
More dear to them than hearth or woman's face,  
Who once has seen it shine before the mast;  
However often Scylla calls to them,  
Charybdis safely passed, they catch her hem.*

*And who can know the sea-mood very long?  
Her breast a cradle at the twilight hour—  
A flash! a mutter! and she takes her strong  
Salt hands and breaks into a splintering shower  
The spar and canvas, treasure and the hope—  
With tear-washed faces on a sandy slope.*

*White bones forgotten when the moon distils  
An argent mist upon its azure plain,  
Or when a hopeful breeze at sunrise fills  
New sails faced west for Avalon again;  
In every mood the sea is beautiful—  
Twin-cymbal of the sky . . . inscrutable.*

## AND NIGHT AND SLEEP

DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

And now he sleeps. And now the earth's  
terrible thunders have ebbed onto the rustle  
of one dazed moth against a yellow light,  
one voice tenderly singing in the little garden  
where the evening died, where even the frogs  
are silent like small clarions forgotten by  
drowsy children, forgotten—then in the last reaches  
before sleep almost remembered, almost—  
but he sleeps and there is no remembering,  
only night's velvet sleepy winging.

Say in his sleep the earth cuddles at last—  
a small furtive beast deep in the wonders'  
burrow, so far, so dark, so lost that agony  
could never be and fear has gone with the swallows  
far beyond the furthest meadow. And so earth,  
and so heaven, and so the most bitter sea are  
as two hands folded to cup the slender dreams  
of still men walking on sands, trees nudging  
and further aside the moon and stars humming:  
There was never a night like this—like a heifer's  
limpid eyes seeing algid waters slowly flowing.

At last all the anguish, and all hungers taper  
into the soul's utter going to wordless peace,  
no voice to name it, no throat to say in sonorous  
nothings this is a marvelous bliss we hunted  
all these years in vain, none to speak of it,  
only as if far waters slurred at last all life  
beyond the final shore, beyond the last gull  
dipping its silver, and last cries slurred out  
in silence, and never knowing how far and deep we are  
how vast the purple tides of all this sleeping are.

And so he sleeps—and so there is no tomorrow,  
when hands lift again to hostile suns, when lips  
part in desperate wonder and eyes are meek and dumb.  
And so he sleeps—endlessly into these numbered hours.  
Endlessly—until the early cock cracks down  
the granite day, and sleep was but another land  
with heavy palms waving always of tomorrows or  
non-remembered yesterdays. Until the cock is shrill.  
But now he sleeps—and tender night is wholly still.

Lil' Lawd Jedus in de mangah lay  
Cow bref minglin' wid de hay  
Lissen to de angels wot dey say  
Up in de paf ob de Milkey Way:  
    "Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!"

De Wise Men say  
Dat He'll be a King,  
King-ob-de-Earf an' ebryting,  
    "Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!"

De Debbil draw neah  
An' he cock up his ear  
—Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!—

De debbil he say  
To de Milkey Way:  
"Wot all de noise fo'?"  
Wot all de noise fo'?"  
    Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!

De anguls stan' roun' on a fleecy cloud  
Lif' up dere haid an' sing out loud:  
    "De Wise Men say  
    Dat He'll be King  
    King-ob-de-Earf an' ebry ting—  
        Mary guttah baby,  
        Joseph guttah boy,  
        Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!"

De debbil he turn kindah sick an' pale,  
Hang down his haid an' crumple-up his tail—  
    Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!

Den de debbil he say: "Doan fo-git  
Ah am de *king* an' Ah ain't t'ru *yit*!"—  
    Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!



## Lil' Lawd Jedus—continued

But de anguls a-standin' on de fleecy cloud  
Lif' up dere haid an' sing out loud:  
    "De Wise Men say  
    Dat *He'll* be *King*,  
    King-ob-de-Earf an' ebry ting,—  
    Mary guttah baby,  
    Joseph guttah boy,  
    *Hallelu-guh! Hallelu-joy!*

## AFTER THESE YEARS

DONALD J. PAQUETTE

Whether or not it is nobler  
to butter one's days like a boarding-house widow  
and sip the years like a glass of skimmed milk,  
I do not know!

I have known some, who handled life  
like a basket of eggs in a wet pantry:  
they were well-souled, ox-footed, fortified,  
and sure of the bargain as a three-balled Jew.

I have watched them weighing the new-born minutes  
with the polished scales of experience:  
examining,  
sorting,  
laying away—  
growing bigger and bigger—preserving  
the strong body, the proud heart, the immortal mind.

I have seen them go out like a switchman's lantern  
on a windy night:  
struck down,  
shrapneled,  
electrocuted,  
and emptied in a few hours  
through the hole of an old tooth—  
who never burnt a finger on the cookstove of life,  
their corroded surplus snatched away  
like a miser's lost purse  
from a Main street gutter!

Yes—I have seen all this—and more—  
and so I think  
I shall save me nothing for the end  
but a few bones, and a few songs—  
nothing—that I can spend!



## EVIL HUSBANDRY

GLADYS SCHMITT

There was a woman in our neighborhood,  
Pious and good,  
Who walked the ways of God beneath the sun,  
Yet had one folly—one.  
I hope I speak small ill of her, for she  
Knows under moss, I trust, serenity.  
Her household broke the Sunday evening calms  
Only with psalms.  
Her porch was clean; her coal was smokeless, hard.  
And yet she kept, and loved, an ugly yard.  
How many evenings when we passed they said,  
"Look, now her grass is dead."  
How many times they whispered, "Why does she  
Still keep that locust tree?  
The hardest aster in her flower bed,  
Having no sun, is dead.  
Those boughs cast heavy shadow. Over these  
White pales, sweet peas  
Might bloom in sun. And dahlias are tall  
And could conceal that wall."  
She heard them whisper, blushed, but stubbornly  
Maintained the tree.  
In June on wash-days all around her feet,  
Fruitless and sweet  
The blossoms lay and made the dust to bloom.  
A wild perfume,  
Exotic, rose among the sun-drenched clothes  
And filled her nose.  
And when her shroud was on her, only then  
Came the two men  
And swung the ax, and made the locust tree  
Like her, a thing for graveyard chemistry.

So does your image hang above my hours,  
Heavy with flowers,  
Exotic clusters sweet to strike me mute,  
Yet without fruit.  
So does your shadow teach all things below  
Your high and passionate level not to grow.  
So do they turn and whisper as they pass,  
"Where is the grass?  
Why does she still indulge this vision, loath  
To stop its growth,  
Until it stifles reason at the root  
And smothers even pleasure in the shoot,  
Until her world becomes a place of stones  
And dust and bones?"

## Evil Husbandry—continued

I who once kept an ordered world, discard  
All virtue now, and keep an ugly yard.  
Yes, keep and love it, for around my feet,  
Fruitless and sweet,  
Are the white blossoms smattering the gloom.  
And wild perfume  
Trembles in the intoxicating air,  
Rotting, but rare.  
Still when I see them stop and speak and hush,  
God knows, I blush,  
And can console myself with only this,  
(Being divided from your kiss):  
No passion is so stubborn and so proud  
It shall not find a shroud.  
And, when the century rolls round again,  
They, the two men  
Named Time and Earth shall bend their mighty backs  
And swing the ax.  
And so my blossoming shame shall fall with me  
And be a thing for graveyard chemistry.

## OBLIVION

GRACE KEMMERLING WELLINGTON

We shall step down into the earth  
and become one with dust—  
the warmth of our lips and heartbeats  
quenched . . .  
the little fires which made  
such brave shining, baffled—  
smothered in the leveled mounds  
which marks who once  
was living,  
and now . . . is nothingness.

So one by one  
we hail the Sun and say farewell  
at Evening Star . . . our bitter cry  
stifled in our throat,  
as one by one . . . we die.

And when the dry pod  
which was a pulsing heart,  
has burst,  
there spills the fine invisible ashes  
which once were dreams and cherished hopes—  
to mingle . . . dust with dust,  
and vanish as our breath . . .

# THROUGH MANY DOORS

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

TO THE MEMORY OF MARIE DRESSLER AND TO FRANCES MARION

The larger manuscript, the love story of Universal Man and Universal Woman, was written by Kathleen Sutton and Joseph Joel Keith. Poems in the volume, which will be published during the coming year, have appeared in the leading poetry journals, metropolitan newspapers and the literary magazines. Only a part of Universal Man's tale in verse follows.

## These Little Earth-Bound Doors

These little earth-bound doors that hearts and eyes  
seek entrance through, reveal to groping man  
a pageantry of color. Each holds surprise  
or hope or growth. Earth heaps no futile ban

upon the eager heart that seeks in spring  
the promise summer flings, that grows resigned  
with loss of bloom bequeathed to harvesting,  
that opens winter's door with wisdom's mind.

With the last portal battered down, when gold  
and crimson ways forsake the precious store,  
then courage will not call the leaving cold:  
what locks might spring beyond the final door!

## Futile Parade

Though gay and colorful partners stress  
the ball's romance, a kind  
of great, pervidious loneliness  
creeps over heart and mind.

The dance is only the heart's mirage,  
and though the heart may throb,  
alas! the fluttering camouflage  
conceals an inner sob.

## Lad Awakening

The word the awakening lad gives clearly  
is born of a frenzied whim.  
The fragile love that he vows sincerely  
is a mad, sweet thing of the limb.

## Through Many Doors—continued

The heart believing in this dear folly  
and wedding the trembling mouth  
(forgetting elder love's melancholy)  
shall be sad as flight going south.

The promise that soared as a bright bird winging,  
shall go with the summer sound,  
leaving wind and the autumn flinging  
the farewell feather to ground.

## Deep in the City Caverns

Deep in the city caverns  
we met—two of a kind—  
saying no word, but knowing  
undefined

love that was deep as praying  
was ours. Going along  
heart gave the heart for mating.  
Then the throng

swept us apart. In dungeons  
of mad, frenzied despair,  
two who were lost went crying  
everywhere.

## Come, Beloved

Come, beloved,  
come where I have lain too long  
in the land of dead lovers:  
here the moon is an indolent one  
calmly kissing the pool;  
the pool is unmoved  
by the tranquil caress of the pine;  
and the pine, chaste in a gown of green,  
is cold as the breast of earth.

Come, beloved,  
blow fragrant warmth upon the forest air;  
make of the pool a mirror for joy;  
of the moon a tower for loveliness.



## Mates of May

The tender heart, untarnished, treasured thing  
that glows as candles nurturing the ill,  
the blind, the hopeful worshipper, will bring  
full sight to love, food for love's citadel.  
If this clear light is ever kept alive,  
no evil wind shall blow, no harm embed  
its mark upon the pureness. Love will strive  
to leave night and malignity unwed.

In all the wrathful world, in all the gloom  
where beaten, dull frustration pounds the breast,  
no answer comes; but in love's guarded room  
the quiet laughter is heard, the flower pressed:  
as sweet and fragrant as a bride's array  
and prized and tender are the mates of May.

## The Deeper Heart

Let not the lovely mouth, howso intense,  
devour your eagerness; let not the glow  
of stolen summers rob your heart of sense  
and lasting warmth, or prematurely, snow  
of heart and mind will freeze the weakened vein;  
and soon the frozen barrier will cast  
all joy aside. When love will cry with pain,  
the callous avalanche will hold her fast.

Let only love that loves the deeper heart  
embed itself within the mind. Let not  
this loveliness without a touch depart;  
and never dwell far from the lofty thought  
that soars as brightly, hopefully and far  
as all the dear, mute promise of a star.

## Misty Haven

The groom had promised love. The bride had slept  
and dreamed of it until that wakeful hour  
when his eyes turned aside: a beast had crept  
into his roaming heart, the precious flower  
had lost one petaled thought, destroyed the whole  
and perfect thing. Upon the vagrant air  
the ill, dissected bloom was thrown, and pole  
and pole apart, they wept the fool's despair.

## Through Many Doors—continued

Though he had never been untrue in deed,  
and only knew impoverishment, deceit  
of mind, this was the fondled beast that freed  
the gnawing comrades: fear, distrust, defeat.  
And ever now they go, his vision dim;  
and she still loving, still distrusting him.

### Sun-and-Moonlight Birth

A warm wind blew and day spoke: "Dare not take  
this lovely one beside you." Yet the flow  
of tide was want that moved the heart's cool lake;  
the sun a gentle torture, calm and slow.  
This fairest goddess of the sun and day  
was wed to chaste warmth. Human heart and word  
had not possessed her, but a man might pray  
upon the breast where virgin ripples stirred.

A cold wind blew and night spoke: "Take your own  
unto. This is one who, first of all,  
belongs to man. She is not one alone  
to dwell apart, a star that knows no fall.  
So take her, keep her near you; heaven and earth  
have granted you this sun-and-moonlight birth."

### The Sun Spilt Gold

The sun spilt gold upon her hair;  
her word fell as a yellow leaf,  
a virgin dove.  
Her honeyed laughter filled the air;  
her hands were remedy for grief.  
I loved my love.

She brought the cup to eager lips;  
she brought the song of sky and south  
from worlds above  
my own. I claimed her finger-tips,  
her fearful eyes, her throat, her mouth.  
I left my love.

### The Good Gods' Token

Another night shall bring a lashing blow,  
a gnawing wind; another midnight hour,  
though never warm, shall not be cold as snow;  
another gloom, sweet with the dear, dead flower,

shall come. But over empty meadow ways  
there shall be something left behind. In roaming,  
the one alone shall hear elusive lays  
as mute as falling stars, as grey birds homing.

The captured night is all the good gods' token  
for sorrows long forsaken, lonely want  
to come. Though this night's love, assuredly spoken,  
shall never breathe this air again, the gaunt  
companions, roaming here, shall ever cherish  
the heart-deep, unseen thing that cannot perish.

### Clovered Store

As tranquil meadows give the weary blade  
to autumn wind, as trees in quiet faith  
forsake the leaf, as blooms that mutely fade  
into the earth, so must the clinging wraith  
of hearts of lovers robed in crepe withdraw  
into the way of gods—in sorrow go,  
believing in a just and royal law  
that comes with kiss of sun and breath of snow.

Beneath the heart that has not lain too long  
with pity for itself, the fuller lore  
awaits the one of sorrow with a song  
tossed from true being, born of clovered store;  
and streams of gladness flood the hearts with zest  
and fill the lover's omnipresent breast.

### Returning

A man will knock upon forbidden doors  
and laugh the hours away with Magdalene,  
blessing the fiery thing that he adores,  
vowing red flame has been

the fire his unwarmed heart and mind have sought.  
But laughter ends; the embers, turning black,  
are thrown aside. Then knowing he forgot  
one home, his heart goes back

To candles burning with a steady glow;  
to mirth untouched by aged, fevered wine;  
to lips as soft as youth, and breast like snow  
calling the child to dine.

## Through Many Doors—continued

### Cell

Let not man's lie destroy your faith in man  
who, in his groping, uses subterfuge.  
In verbal war against the lasting ban  
that circumscription hurls upon him, huge  
and pompous words, that would secrete his real  
and little self, are thrown. This is the cry  
of want, the earnest shout that must conceal  
the struggling heart that is too brave to die.

Let brothers boast if they will plod the earth;  
and beat the heavens, ever out of reach,  
with battered winds. These are the journeys worth  
more than the shouting: brave hearts here beseech  
the fine, inseparative whole to tell  
if floods will soon engulf the seeking cell.

### Woman in Grey

Every evening they saw her going,  
the woman in grey, lonely as November wind,  
beyond the town where branches of the willows  
hung like the cool, disheartened robes of grief;  
she and the holy processional of twilight clouds,  
the vision like soft, sweet sorrow of half-forgotten tears.  
For one more fleeting moment there they saw her  
during the grim expectancy when silence was about to scream;  
and then—the sorrowing, silken darkness wedded to her hair—  
they saw no more the edge of the town  
where thought was dark as the blind who slumber,  
as silent and uncomplaining as genteel weeping.

### Fugacious One

Fugacious one, unload your shallow kit;  
the sheerest heart, unpacking cowardice,  
can fill the load with growth and love of it.  
Run not away; a rich and generous slice

of this life's fruit awaits the connoisseur.  
Not of oneself alone but of another  
must you partake, and with another stir  
the heart of the inseparative mother.



## What Fruit Shall Come

Out of the vast, unknowable sphere,  
the branch has started growing.  
When shall we know the worth or fear  
of our sowing?

What fruit shall come? Will harvest bring  
richness for growth, awaking?  
Or shall we cry and damn the thing  
of our making?

## A Young Boy's Flight

This slim young arrow plunging through the stream,  
this eager flight caressing summer's heart:  
will this small brown hunter keep the sharpened dart,  
the swift ascent conserve its precious steam?

This seeker, needing man's legitimate prey,  
will he find life and take his little share,  
or constantly pursue the frightened hare  
while greed consumes what only self can slay?

## There Is No Fear

There is no somber fear in darkness,  
whose cool caress is balm for weary plowmen,  
and prayer for women with little ones hidden away  
safe in the dear, undefeatable arms of slumber.  
And out in the sweet, dark air of the forest and meadow,  
one and one are joined together, one and one are fearless,  
taking the inescapable fragrance of their being  
as they take the dear night, nestling beneath her blanket,  
spread over the hour and all the hours of centuries.  
O brave and gay are receptive lovers of darkness  
who never shall dread the ultimate gloom that awaits them.

## Caliginous Journeys

For one mouth to give sweetness to another mouth;  
for one heart to caress another heart,  
blest with the lovely helplessness;  
for one mind to blend with another mind

## Through Many Doors—continued

as one bloom grafted to another bloom,—  
oh, these are the wonders that bless  
the vagrant heart,  
and these are the wonders that damn,—  
the deceitful, capricious wonders,  
intricately woven,  
that have flown from home,  
that have been distorted,  
that have profaned  
the supreme loveliness that bore them.

For there is only one  
munificent heart;  
only one incorporeal door,  
ever swinging ajar,  
that leads beyond  
caliginous journeyings  
to universal mind  
and omnipresent love.

## EAST SIDE

RUTH HILL MITCHELL

Old hag-houses toss banana peels  
Onto slattern streets;  
Streets grab them as a beggar his hand-out.  
Decrepit sidewalks creep like hoary rabbis  
Clucking between broken teeth.  
Streets are inattentive to the din;  
The jabbering of peddlars;  
The stumbling of drunks  
Merging with glaring clutter,  
Shoving, groping, pushing,  
Halting to pierce cat-glances into ungardened alleys.  
Streets rush on in panic-collision:  
Right left, right left—  
Fagged streets,  
Life labored streets turn bewildered,  
Hesitate—  
Then leap eagerly into Tompkins Square,  
Stretch out under trees and laugh!

# RAINY SATURDAY AFTERNOON

By Clifford Bragdon

*This is Mr. Bragdon's second appearance in our pages. Readers who found pleasure in the author's "Heroes Forgotten" which we ran last year will be glad to know that it was accorded a two-star mention among the best stories of the year. Mr. Bragdon is now living in Cleveland, Ohio.*

GEORGE was working on his bike in the garage behind the house. Nothing could be done outside, for the afternoon was thick with a misty, heavy rain. Nothing was worth doing in the house, for George's mother, though down doing the Sunday marketing at the moment, would be back home and around the place after a while. The garage, however, belonged solely to George. It had been his and his father's place together when his father was alive.

Because of the rain it was barely light enough in the garage to see what you were doing, but, anyway, no one would be coming around wanting anything. That was one consolation. It was good here by yourself. You could get away from trouble in this old place and just let yourself alone while you worked at something. George worked hard this afternoon, down on his knees between his father's workbench and the open door, the rear wheel of the bike wedged firmly against his stomach.

The work he was doing was intricate but familiar, so that he was able to give a large part of himself to the impressions in his mind. Uncle Fred was a slob . . . it only went to prove . . . one week after the funeral he comes around with a collie mutt under his fat arm and plunks it down on the kitchen table—a fat, whimpery little bugger, all stomach. One week . . . and mother starts bawling, holding onto uncle

Fred's arm like she can hardly stand up. He couldn't get it out of his head . . . and then she says, "Oh, Georgie, aren't you going to thank your uncle Fred?"

Tears rushed to George's eyes at the hard memory of it. He smacked the pliers he held in his hand down on the concrete floor of the garage. But this helped little; the picture had to be finished out. There is that compulsion concerning wretched experiences remembered. He had known she was going to pull the next one, just as sure as anything—"We thought the dear little thing might help to . . . to . . ." He had even known that she wouldn't finish the sentence. Then more bawling all over the place. And uncle Fred's going, "Tch tch there now Nannie tch tch there now Nannie." He squirmed. Judas Priest, did she really have to be like that, bawling over everything, twisting her fingers? The old man wouldn't of stood for it.

George sighed and wiped the tears out of first one eye and then the other with his oily fingers, and for a few minutes gave his attention to a stiff cotter pin. This attended to, however, he sat back on the floor, eyes running over the tools and the vise and the shavings still cluttering the old workbench. He was not conscious of what he was looking at, yet it had, as did the whole place, the effect of loosening his thoughts and feeling. Judas Priest,

## Rainy Saturday Afternoon—continued

did she supposed he liked it, this crying around? When he just stood there and let her go on, it didn't mean he liked it. He didn't want her to cry. At night, when she thought he was asleep, she cried, and that was really crying; it went right through you. It slid up the stairs, right through the locked door, and in under the covers. It made you feel ice-cold, and yet as if you wanted just the same to get up and stand by her bed and tell her you were sorry, that you knew how it was.

But he couldn't do it. The day came, and it was all different. She didn't seem to see that he felt as bad as she did . . . and there was the bawling . . . whenever anybody was around . . . her big stiff of a brother for instance. George spun the wheel of his bike now till it hummed, shaking his head violently. He got to his feet. It was awful. It was god-awful.

OUTSIDE the door the rain was hanging like a grey blanket in the air. The collie pup was lying with its head on its paws staring into the rain. For a moment the boy leaned against the work-bench and looked at the pup. Then he frowned. "Come here, stupid," he whispered. A female. Wouldn't he though? Just that. He had to whisper because his mother might be home by now, and the dog's name was really Queenie—or at least that's what his mother and uncle Fred had named her. If his mother heard him calling the mutt "stupid", she'd holler to uncle Fred about it, and there would be hell. "Come here, stupid," he said again, and the puppy waggled up. George began to pull absently at her floppy ears.

As he did so, he began in spite of himself to smile. The old man would not of minded the name "stupid". Why, probably he'd of called her the same thing himself. He didn't even mind being called the old man, either. "I don't care if you want to call me the old man, sport; go ahead," he said once, "but if I ever hear of you calling your mother the old lady, I'll beat your head

out from between your ears." George smiled, playing with the ecstatic white puppy. Hell, he was always going to beat his head out from between his ears for something, but he never did it. He might talk big enough, but he wouldn't hurt a fly. Everybody knew that. He wasn't yellow though, and he had the right idea about fighting. "If ever I hear of you starting a fight, I'll . . ." but the boy didn't bother to finish the thought. "And if some other kid starts it, and you don't lick him, why the same thing goes. Got it?"

George whirled the wheel again, the tears almost at his eyes again. Damn it. Golly, he could hear him just as plain as if he was leaning down over him talking to him. His big hands were on his knees, and his voice sounded tough all right, till you caught his blue eyes looking out at you from under his eyebrows. The thickest, blackest eyebrows in seven counties.

The boy jumped to his feet once more, tossing the dog toward the door. "Get the hell out of here, you. Go on. Scram." The puppy scuttled out the door, and George bent over his bike again. He went hard at the work he was doing—some delicate adjustment of chain and coaster brake. These people, they never got the point, not of anything. You always knew they were going to do and say the weirdest things at the weirdest time. Uncle Fred was a big, fat, mealy-mouthed slob, and that's all there was to it.

When a little boy from down the block came running into the yard hollering for him, George was still hard at work. He let the boy shout for a while, and then, realizing that he would not have sense enough to look for him in the garage, he got slowly to his feet and sauntered to the door. The youngster was about to run off down the block again. "What do you want, squirt?" George called.

At first the boy could not get his breath and only pointed excitedly down the street toward the corner where the boulevard was. Over everything was



the rain, so that the distance was a blur of lighter and heavier grey. George could make out, however, a small group of figures on the corner. He was mildly interested, but had no intention of showing it. "Well, all right. Shoot," he drawled. "What's eating you?" By this time the boy had got his breath again and seemed now rather more embarrassed than excited in the older boy's presence, but he mumbled something, pointing down the street.

George did not catch what he had said and grew impatient. "For Pete's sake, kid," he said, "what do you want? I'm busy."

This time the boy spoke louder. "It's your dog, George. On the corner."

GEORGE did not wait to hear any more. Without meaning to, he started across the yard. As he ran down the street, he was not thinking of anything, nor feeling anything. Not until he reached the edge of the rapidly increasing group about the street sign did he begin again to take conscious impression of events. There were all these people. In the rain and fog they seemed to drift, to float slowly around with a muffled confusion. Yet despite this impression, he pushed his way through them into the small empty place around the foot of the street sign where the pup lay. As he saw her, the pressure of all the people left him.

Queenie lay in a small, white heap, very small, at the feet of all these people. She lay surrounded by black rubbers and galoshes, wet ankles and the rain. Only her tail was in motion, and that hardly. Her eyes stared mildly into space.

For an instant the boy stood still looking down at her, and then before anybody had time to speak kindly to him, he was on his knees with the small head, no bigger than a man's fist, cupped in his greasy hands. He could easily have picked up the whole puppy and held her in his lap, but he did not do it that way. He knelt in front of her, on one knee now, held the small

head cupped in his hands and looked, as if posed for a photograph. "Aw hell, stupid," he whispered. The words were not spoken in a loud enough, steady enough voice for the pitying figures circled above the puppy and the boy to catch. He had no feeling for the rain nor chill.

But then, by this time someone had to say something. "I said I tried to miss him, Buddy. Pulled on the emergency. He run right out in front of me." And then more indistinctly, as if turned around, "You saw it, right out before I could do a thing, didn't he?"

Then another voice, thicker, heavier, "Yeah, scared. Stopped right in the center of the road. Wet too."

And another, "Same thing happened to little Fritzie last fall. You remember little Fritzie, Mrs. Elliott."

"You just can't keep a dog in the city, even out here, and that's all there is to it."

"It's a shame the way . . ."

"A boy and his dog . . ."

"It's just a shame."

These words, as abruptly ceasing as they had begun, brought George gradually back into time and place. He noted shuffling feet, and faintly, a car sliding to a halt beside the curb, and beyond that, brakes applied along the boulevard, and more feet approaching. Cars honked and raced in dull succession. A few voices continued to whisper among themselves to keep from simply standing there. "Too bad, isn't it?" "Isn't it a pity?" But to George all sound was only a constant pressure at his ears, mixed with the thud of his own pulse, slow and heavy, as if he were never going to breathe alone again, never going to move freely out of the rain and the circle of sappy, black feet. In the distance still the wet tires incessantly licked along the pavement.

The rain ran down the back of his neck, inside the old red sweater of his father's. It plastered the hair to his head, and it so diminished the size of the little head he held cupped in his hands, that he seemed to be holding

## Rainy Saturday Afternoon—continued

only a skull—with the eyes still alive in it. Looking so intently at the dog began to make him feel sleepy. He began to feel lonely, despite the monotonous hum in his ears from the life around him. There were no tears; the only thing to keep him awake, seemingly, was the cramp of his position. He was not thinking now of the dog before him, nor even of himself. He had made no answer to any words directed toward him. In reality he seemed to be waiting for something, something he knew in his heart was surely going to happen.

**T**HEN suddenly through the dead weight of sound upon him he caught the click of his mother's step, uneven, light yet clumsy. Even through the conversation, through the shuffling of his captors and the rain—sounds now all at once more distinct than before—he could single her out.

The steps drew up to the crowd and halted. The boy imperceptibly contracted his shoulders as against a blow distant but inevitable. It was what he had been waiting for. His mother asked what was the matter, and everyone whispered sympathy and information. She made her way to the side of her boy and leaned over him, touching his arm gently.

"There, there, dear," she said in her flat, nice voice, "never mind, honey."

George made no answer to her words, and there was a short pause, until she tried again a little more loudly, as if his grief might well have made him deaf to his surroundings. "Come, dear, you must go home now."

Still George did not move. But he was thoroughly aware now of each separate rustle and sigh. He would have gotten away from here if he had been able. His teeth were so tightly closed that his jaws hurt. His mother spoke to him now a third time.

"Come, dear. See, the little fellow is gone now."

Then, when her son still showed no attention, she straightened up sadly, shaking her head. Turning to the crowd, a little gentle smile on her tired face,

she said, "You see,"—and George held his breath—"you see, folks, his own father left us only a month ago." Certainly tears lay very close behind the words.

Again feet shuffled in strong commiseration, and tongues made small distressed sounds. Somebody coughed. The little group stirred like a barnyard waking when the sun rises. No one said anything for a moment, but only stared. At length, however, the man who had hit the dog leaned impulsively down over George and said in a loud voice.

"Listen, buddy, listen," he said. "I'll tell you what. I'll take you right down now and buy you the best pup you can find. What d'you say? How's that suit you, Bud?"

Another silence while the crowd relaxed, waiting for the boy to let go into tears. In that moment, however, George saw Stupid again. Her eyes were closed. She lay perfectly still. Yet he was not thinking of the puppy lost. He let her head sink down to the wet ground in front of him.

At this moment he felt crazy. Jerkily he rose to his feet, wild things to say in his heart. He faced the crowd—but the words in his throat choked him, so that he could not speak. And then suddenly, easily, he was calm. He looked at these wet, concerned, compassionate, adult faces—and felt all at once equally as old as they. Babies. They stood staring like silly babies; they were kids, really, all of them, not just his mother. How he had just been feeling was in this moment already an old memory. The hot things he had been going to shout drifted away from him. His eyes settled on one smiling, embarrassed face. George thought this must be the man who had just spoken to him.

He himself spoke without the slightest embarrassment.

"No, thanks, mister," he said, "but thanks just the same . . . honestly." Then he bent down, picked the dog up in his arms and walked through the crowd and away from it.

The dim glow of a road across the heath,  
The sterile ponds, a hut's light, own the world.  
West with the sundown, slopes have faded, shrunken  
Into an attitude of art too fragile  
Longer to be an etching of the earth.  
Sky and the rocks piled towards it have become  
Now but the shadow of a mystic mating  
Drawn into heaven.

But between the mist-hung  
Ranges lie the moors, night-restive, level,  
Low with the brooding solitude of soil.  
Remnants of rust-gone days, the ruined fences  
Totter dead with decay into the softer  
Rottings of land, under a fringe of grass.  
The darkness and the melancholy sounds  
Wander the wold.

Shallow with reeds, the marshes  
Mirror a dull brown multitude of birds.  
From field the distances to field seem endless,  
Touched with the last, a lone, reality.

Nocturne and peace are one. The living earth has  
Other disquietudes than calm: the breathing  
Birds in the rushes and the stridulance of  
Insects hidden in the tulle; cry  
Of four-foots fleeing to a shelter; stir  
Of grass and scruboaks entering the night.

The low pools tremble. Earth is here, unguarded,  
Not with defiance but with fear. Only  
The long reeds choking in the marshes, ground  
Lain fallow years of stagnant desuetude,  
And the far roaring of the fields, akin  
To cities and the sea, have life here.

Men  
Are different on a heath from other men,  
Not too much living, but too little. Ducks,  
Interminable fields, desires: these three  
Are all that know a heathman.

Harry moved  
Close to the hearth, stirring the bits of fire,  
The poker steaming with the logs, the kettle  
Hissing across the flames and into the black  
Mouth of the chimney charred. The body crouching  
Hard by the embers on the flags struck shadows  
On the back wall, over the head of Stuart,  
Waiting, who said, "That's high enough for a fire.  
Kindle the words now."

## Heath Men—continued

Harry sat to his left,  
Legs at a sprawl, the heavy hands pocketed;  
“Don’t say what you’ve been thinking of. The heath’s  
A good place to forget the things it’s bred.”  
Stuart, leaning a little, “What’s your meaning?  
Leave the thoughts stinking in the bogs, like peat?  
Or with the half-torn carcass of a mallard?  
Christ, then! It’s this—the women are too far:  
The rottings of the farm hands, or those beasts  
That trek across the ranches with a plow?  
They’re women, are they, or the ghosts of women?  
And you’d suggest that we—”

“You’d have me living  
Sterile beside the marshes? Beside you?”  
The legs moved from the stirred fire, exuding  
Warmth from the coals. The eyes stared at the flames,  
The body moving with breath, desire a flame  
But no stirring.

Stuart rose sickly, smiling,  
“Time enough left for future talking. Late now,”  
Left the deep hut upon the deeper moors,  
Felt the heat stay behind him, saw the smoke  
Pour from the chimney with the sparks.

The ducks  
Rose with a clapping at his step, a cloud  
Darker than night, moving across the dark,  
The feathers dripping water.

Far to east,  
The lights of a lone band upon the mountains  
Wavered and wandered. Here, beside the cabin,  
The staunch nape of his horse fell groundwise, grassward,  
The teeth cropping a harvest from the weeds.

Love is a subtle transiency, a subtler  
Thing to perpetuate when it is real.  
If night were only once, or words were once,  
Or dawn the fantasy of minds at rest,  
Cycles might lose the art of reappearance,  
Moors reach infinitude, birds fly forever.

The fields fell to the rear while Stuart rode,  
And rose again out of the night ahead.  
Soon only a glow beside the road’s glow,  
Chimney and windows of the hut receded.

Road, marshes, the mirrored bodies of the  
Quieted ducks, the rider, owned the world.



I.

So a mouse  
chatters paper in the  
kitchen.

The trolley wheels gride like  
sin on the curved  
tracks into the barn.

Lonely, along the side—  
walk three floors  
below, the clip  
clop of a woman's  
heels.

And down  
by the river  
the power house drones.

When a bulky  
electric truck rumbles  
by, the whole house  
gets the  
shakes.

Would that be  
a pushcart with wire  
wheels, going out Avenue  
B?

II.

The milkman!  
Horse at a trot, wheels  
burr and bock, bottles  
jingle cheer. Gyup!

The child softly  
sleep-laughes  
into her pillow.

But it's the hearty  
Polock drunk, out  
there, wobbling home,  
sums up  
the night:

*Oo Ray!!*

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

DANIEL W. SMYTHE

Upon your shoulders the rocks are many.  
I see them pressing down hills and hearts relentlessly.  
I see the boulders placed in the way of biting plowshares,  
Or pressed tightly against the violence of rain and the wind:  
The flints, the stones, the high crags that fasten with unwavering shadows  
Not only upon the earth,  
But upon the unresentful minds of the people!

I have heard a slow, unclamoring song among you that changes but little.  
A measure having been wrenched from the humpy line of the fields,  
Or written in the clean beauty between the million hills,  
It has a theme that is strong and straight as these New Hampshire forests.  
Yet, somehow, I must feel this thick air of hypocrisy;  
For whether in a time of stress or otherwise,  
You cannot open your hearts with words out of clear minds.  
The cold secrecy of the rocks has been found transmutable.

I cannot think of you  
But I must think of spare winding roads;  
The round-shouldered men who look up from the fields  
Or going frequently to the oatmeal water under the apple tree;  
The weather-beaten stores, each with its hitching rail,  
And dusty individuals with strong personal opinions  
About the weather and crops and the local politics.  
I think of the many forests spreading over the mountainous borders;  
The silent fingers of the signposts that all point to the cities.

There is reason to love you: for instance, spirited winds of autumn  
That bring in the baldwins, the russets, and the running gold of the  
gardens.  
The gifts of summer are the cool sunsets, thunderstorms, lilacs and  
goldenrod,  
Which impressively flow upon the hills  
And talk in undiscovered ways to these stern-breathing people.  
Among the thousand things to remember: the pheasants that run as fast  
as dogs  
Sometimes in front of you on the lonely roads;  
And the bright children who make baskets out of burrs in the fall season,  
And who revel in snowfights in the winter.  
There is little need of trying to break your rocks.  
I leave you with a good taste in my mouth.

# BRIGHT ARMOR FOR ALABAMA

KATHLEEN SUTTON

## I.

The South is a tawny cat  
Stretched in the sun . . .

Rivers of heat  
Ooze and flow'  
Like thick cane syrup  
Over blue hills,  
Through petaled redbud, crepe myrtle,  
Into the dust;  
Into the blood-red soil  
Of Alabama.

## II.

Life is swift where the call of Spring  
Is the sudden flash of a redbird's wing,  
Where Summer is topaz and emerald set  
In the gleaming hilt of a bayonet . . .

An Indian chieftain long ago  
Came from a far land, riding slow,  
Seeking peace and a flowing breast:  
"Alabama!" he cried. "We rest!"

DeSoto came, but he did not stay  
But the trifling time it took to betray  
Tuskaloosa, genial and old:  
DeSoto showed mercy only for gold.

LaSalle came in with the river stench,  
Bringing the tongue and sword of the French,  
Cotton and corn—and white men's graves—  
Till ships brought reeking cargo of slaves.

Corn and timber, cotton and tar:  
The English came on the tides of War;  
Andrew Jackson and Horseshoe Bend,  
Pelham, Davis—and riches' end . . .

Summer fades and bare Autumns breed  
Arrogant hearts in poverty's creed;  
A code that threatens an alien blood,  
And fights for a jasmine womanhood.

## Bright Armor for Alabama—continued

### III.

A tawny cat  
Sprawls in the red dust,  
Stretches lazily,  
Uncurling quick, unanimous claws . . .

There is a beauty  
Sinister in its truth:  
Low in the night sky  
A moon hangs yellow as cream;  
Live oaks,  
Looming over the past,  
Drip a weird moss beckoning  
With gray, mysterious fingers  
To secrets darkly hid.—

Even the slow breeze nauseates  
With unreal sweetness—  
Jasmine, honeysuckle, rose—  
And the trickling notes of a mockingbird  
In some vague treetop  
Are as poisoned arrows  
In the austere heart . . .

### IV

Out of the shadows a strange quartet,  
Black as the doom no men forget,  
Black as the souls that haunt perdition,  
Sings the song of an old tradition.

Sings of the sorrows known to man,  
With a wash-board drum and a frying pan  
Striking the rhythm born of the South,  
And a jew's-harp fondled against the mouth:

Song of passion and Paradise,  
And black and white in a bitter vise,  
Love and beauty and nameless hope  
Tempered with fear and a raw-hide rope.

Fear and mercy in endless feud:  
Cost of a jasmine womanhood  
Golden-haired and fragilely shaped—  
Flower no living black has raped.



Thimbled fingers on wash-board drum  
Beat the measure of Kingdom Come  
Voices rich as a honeycomb  
Singing the Lord in His heavenly dome . . .

V.

A tawny cat  
Sleeps in the steaming noon;  
But at night it stalks,  
Emerald-eyed and vigilant,  
Through the dark forest  
Of degradation . . .

Old legends;  
Tradition of heroes raised  
To a quick sword and a glass of Bourbon—  
And of jasmine women,  
Chaste as the delicate bloom  
They resemble.

Beware, O Men  
Born without legend,  
Free of the torture  
Of beauty menaced and threatened . . .  
Keep silent tongues,  
O Men of other regions:  
Beauty's avengers  
Too long have worn bright armor  
To lay down the shield,  
Betraying with false wisdom  
Its soul and its blessing!

A tawny cat sleeps . . . sleeps . . .  
Undisturbed by nightmares  
Of Scottsboro . . .  
Tuscaloosa . . .  
The heat of noon  
Is intense in Alabama.

WARRIOR

ALAN CREIGHTON

Surrounded by stark field  
And tight waves of hill  
He did not leave his plough.  
Though haunted by shining clouds  
And creep of forest  
He strode alone,  
Cleaving straight furrows  
Far from trumpet and flag!

# BALLAD OF BASTARD GIN

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY

The night was red and the night was white  
But grey as a corpse's grin.  
The night was mauve, with a winking star;  
The seventh night on the calendar,  
But the name of the night was "Gin."

The red was silk of a woman's gown;  
The white was a woman's skin;  
And mauve the sound of a string and bow;  
The star a lamp with a sallow glow;  
And the grey was a fog of gin.

And heads were slow, but the senses swift,  
As swift as a tarpon's fin.  
And the white and red and the red and white,  
And yellow and mauve through a foggy sight,  
In the fog of the bastard gin.

The red and white! Was she young or old?—  
Ha God, she was feminine!  
And the young and old and the low and high  
Are all the same to a bloodshot eye  
Through the fog of the bastard gin.

And the red and white and the white and red  
And the curve of a tilted chin.  
And the red and white. Was she stale or fresh?—  
A yard of cloth and a woman's flesh  
Through the fog of the bastard gin.

The thick of tongues and the shift of feet;  
The mauve of the violin.  
The curls of smoke and the ashy blinks;  
The pop of corks and the crystal clinks,  
And the reek of the bastard gin.

And reeling, slithering mauve; and grey  
Bog-fogginess out and in.  
But the red and white in the ooze and jag!  
And the red and white—was she maid or hag  
In the wobble of bastard gin?

The sway of shoulders, the touch of cheeks,  
The mauve of the violin.  
But the white and red and the red and white—  
Or sylph or slut of the seventh night?—  
The night of the bastard gin.

## I.

Could I but inundate you with a flood of golden song  
 And surging expectancies  
 I would sing and feel less wild  
 Unfaced by that much terror  
 The stark and melancholy ghost of years.

For you are the blood in my blood  
 Melted into my essence  
 The stream of life within me.  
 Colliding in a starburst we met as Soul, as atoms  
 Caught up in a flame and phantasmagoria  
 Of life suddenly quick with meaning  
 Caught in love that shivered deeper (once)  
 Than entrails entombed in common uncaught clay.

If I could sing I *would* sing and this would be my song:  
 To course with you from point to newer point  
 In a shower of wonder and fire  
 And all such winged contentments . . .  
 To let you hold the silver chalice of my days  
 In your strong, pale white hands  
 And I yours in mine . . .  
 To know without surcease that undefinable satisfaction  
 Which merely is awareness  
 A perpetual, slow cosmic intoxication  
 An inhalation, a simple effervescence . . .  
 To meet with you on the outer ramparts above the precipice  
 And over the breath-taking abyss  
 Building the fortress of our souls on one high pinnacle of delight  
 And terror and ecstasy and a madness all divine . . .  
 To quest all aloneness and tragic solitude  
 With at least two fingers fast and our mingled breaths blowing  
 Against a greater wind  
 Of mysteries, bewilderingments, all secret dark despair . . .  
 To have the splendour cascade about us like a foam  
 The crests of glittering seas  
 A jeweled envelopment  
 Of efforts made, understandings accomplished, necessities realized . .  
 To stand together among the billion unnumbered  
 Apart from all that was, apart from what might be  
 So facing and rescuing this hour of immortality  
 So facing and taking and sifting Time's moments  
 Through fingers flung high to the gay white flight of suns  
 Of suns and moons and stars wheeling only to the pulsations  
 Of our own compacted orbital influence . . .  
 To go running crying dancing singing down the days  
 And nights of the world

## If I Could Sing—continued

Conceived of flame and born of holy enlightenment . . .  
To hover known and knowing, absorbing and absorbed  
This single imponderable instant before annihilation . . .  
To secure, over timeless measureless vacuums  
(Loneliness, isolation, nothing)  
This fragmentary contact, this cleavage with  
*Something* . . .  
Ah yes—if I could sing all this would be my song.

### II.

You are the spring of my days on earth.  
To me you are hyacinths  
The April breeze rustling across young grasses  
The checkered pattern of sunlight slanting through forests  
The bright streak of birds.  
To me you are asphodel  
The perfume sifted upon a summer night  
The thin crescent moon hurtling beyond the mottled clouds of heaven.

I am contained in you as a seed in the earth.  
For me you are the rain of fecundity and creation,  
The white silent terror in me  
Held fast in the tough hide of its oneness and aloneness  
Under the light of your regard shall loosen  
And under the rain of your sympathy change  
And become as a flower,  
The magic of the chemistry of growth and alteration  
Thus to have its one, inevitable way.

Shall you then, my rain, my sunlight, my providence  
Desert the seed of your sowing?

### III.

I feel wild and unchained and marked now as dreamless . . .  
In every heart first lies the tracing of the dream  
But in my heart it is not  
Since long ago it gathered elsewhere (to your keeping).

Yes, now and at last you hold all my dreams:  
Of subtle sweet compassions  
Of the approximation of souls  
Of every kindled insight  
Of the preciousness of luminous exaltations.  
All, all my dreams you hold in your hands, your heart  
The cup of your heart contains my heart  
And never can I surrender mine to another  
And never can yours (beloved) hold another.



Like a child crying, crying for the moon  
So I for my dreams  
But the moon is not so necessary . . .

## IV.

What of music  
The sticky little buds in Central Park  
                                that hung about the benches  
The most fantastic window shopping trips along each street  
(And then a quiet ride atop a bus and reaching out  
                                to finger certain stars)  
Or what of sands made silver in the moonlight  
The invisible rhythms of night near the open sea  
With endless undulations curling along the shores  
In hollow long roars and a whispering recession  
(Sands of time trickling back into the abyss?)  
And wind, a clean wide wind sweeping  
In from measureless distances to ruffle your hair.

What of this magic of thus reaching all creation  
Its seas and shores  
Its streets and parks  
Its buildings and people  
Its topsy-turvy shop windows  
Its Schubert B minor and Cesar Franck  
Its passionate holy triumphant march of song

that beats along the earth

That beat once in our hearts because our hearts *did* beat  
The way they do not now . . .

v.

Yes—ah yes  
 Could I but compose  
 Out of the nameless substances  
 Of things that sing, that sing within my blood  
 Make song itself a flood  
 Make song for you a flood  
 Sheer expectancy  
 Could I but inundate you in this well and swell of song  
 You! blood of my blood  
 Sunk into the core of me  
 Keeper of my essence  
 Sum of my necessities  
*O could I but sing*  
 And singing make you sing . . .

## FOUR O'CLOCK MORNING

KATHRYN WINSLOW

Four o'clock morning . . .  
the long fog fingers  
twined in the eucalyptus trees  
caressing their bark . . .

Morning  
slanting a cold shadow  
on a green pool of velvet

Draw the yellow satin quilt  
touch my shoulders  
with your strong hands  
touch me dearest  
touch me

Coffee  
in yellow cups  
flowered with indigo and amber  
Coffee sipped in the cold shadowed light  
under satin

Cigarette smoke  
fingering the white papered wall

Sharp hot taste of cigarettes and coffee . . .  
and the fog  
bitter sweet with eucalyptus  
sitting on the window sills

## THE BROKEN BRIDGE

LESLIE SAVAGE

A fragile span of steel is flung  
Across the rushing tide,  
A link between two distant shores  
The leaping waves divide.

A span of love has linked our lives  
Where surging doubt would drown,  
God help us through the swirling flood  
The day the bridge goes down.

# BORDERLINES

By William Kozlenko

*William Kozlenko was born in Philadelphia in 1907. He first studied to become a musician, but abandoned this career some time ago for a literary one. He is the author of a published work on George Jean Nathan, and is now working on a critical study of Beethoven. Mr. Kozlenko now lives in New York, N. Y.*

## episode I

A steady drizzle of rain had beaten the streets all day. Night had come. A slight mist rose upward from the wet streets like smoke from opened graves. The houses blinked their little yellow lights like old men going blind. They stood half-hidden in the shadows of their surroundings. The rain like an untiring musician inspired the streets to glisten like excited, sweating dancers . . .

## episode II

He walked alone through the streets. No people hindered his walking. Had the night been clear and filled with stars, numerous people would have been strolling back and forth, whispering and laughing, their laughter trailing after them like thin strips of gayety. Automobiles, filled with their amorous cargoes, would have swished by quickly like frightened monstrous cock-roaches.

But rain makes cowards of people. There were few who moved about now. They were hidden away in their houses: rain having created a sort of nameless fear in their hearts. The only companions on his side were the houses whose half-hidden lights seemed to glimmer with memories long forgotten. The people walked about inside the bowels of their homes and cast their shadows on the lowered window-shades. They seemed to fly past him like start-

led birds. Others lingered for a brief second, as if they were trying to recall something, and, then, they too expired in the light . . .

## episode III

He found himself musing over incidents, people, and events, that were once very important to him. Realities resurrected from out of the tombs of all his yesterdays, again assumed a strange spectre of life. They seemed to return, ranging themselves in file like a regiment of missing soldiers. They moved silently past him like an endless procession of wordless phantoms. Like fleshless, empty, conscience-stricken ghosts they blackmailed him into accepting them into the immediate present of his thoughts . . .

Faces of friends . . . words of love and desire . . . gestures of affection . . . all came back from their weary march, and asked to be identified. But somehow, his feelings, once filled with life, were dead and static now. One cannot breathe life into things that were gone. But the tired and dragging march of yesterdays, filled with so many twisted emotions, left his mind in a state of disorder and laceration. It is not so simple to forget, despite the ironies of the cynic, the beauties and tragedies that filled his earlier years with so much happiness and sadness.

. . . He suddenly burst into a silent,

## Borderlines—continued

bitter laugh. All his thoughts scampered back to their tombs. "I'm a god-damn fool sick with sentimentalities . . ." That broke the spell. His ears, dulled by the awakened ghosts, suddenly became aware of his lonely steps beating out its steady rhythm on the pavement. He turned the corner, and began walking toward Market Street . . .

### episode IV

The door of a house opened suddenly.

A shadow leaped out like a frightened animal. A shadow is a preface to something alive. For a moment that frightened him. He did not want a trespasser. But in a few seconds the man was lost in the rain, and his footsteps—the one symbol of his being alive—receded into a faint diminuendo.

### episode V

His perambulations brought him eventually to Market Street. He became aware of amputated shadows huddled together in doorways, abusing all the physical laws of impenetrability, by merging into one another.

The people waiting so fearfully in the vestibules and lobbies of hot, stuffy buildings, peered out of their gloomy shelters with frightened eyes. The swirling pools of water grimaced at them mockingly. It had begun to rain hard again. A droning mumble encircled their heads like invisible clouds of smoke. Phrases were snatched up by the wind and allowed to die on many strange ears.

The trolley-cars crawled along the wet streets like disfigured caterpillars. The wet, glistening streets distorted the overhead lights into fantastic caricatures. His eyes, fascinated by the illuminated legends, beat the empty words into his head. Names, which had no intimate connection with his life, lodged themselves into his brain. As he walked away, his tongue kept muttering a jumble of words in a Gertrudian rhythm.

"Mr. Hill Says . . ."

"Automat: The Eating Place of

Nickels . . ."

"Smoke Camel Cigarettes . . ."

"It Is Now 8 P. M."

### episode VI

"Joe's Lunch Room"

A number of men were sitting around on unpainted stools, sipping cups of steaming coffee. Blackboards were almost white with the twisted chalk scrawls of menus. Men were sitting in the corner, with their hats pulled low over their noses, making them seem as if they had no faces. He walked past slowly, and peered in. Nothing. Men clinging to life like flies to fly-paper. His steps carried him away. But such "lunch-counters" were as prolific as ants. Ten to every street. And the same tableau greeted him in all.

A low knocking on a window of a darkened house made him look up. He discerned a woman smile at him. He walked on. A second and third ratta-ta. He glanced up again, and shook his head. She beckoned to him again, and held up one finger. He walked on. He heard the knock repeated. He looked back. A man had stopped and was smiling at her. He saw the man hesitate for a moment, then ascend the steps, open the unlatched door, and enter . . .

He walked on—past many men and women—and peered into their chalk-like faces. When he peered into them they gazed back at him vacantly. As vacantly as bottomless mirrors unable to reflect the images that gaze into them.

### episode VII

The tableau as a whole excited him. He wanted to get something personal into the words which he wanted to put down on paper. He was going to discover somebody to whom he could talk, and learn the man's confession from his own trembling lips.

As he was walking about, becoming lost in this involved geography, he discerned a huddled figure in a darkened



vestibule. From where he stood, it looked like a twisted, black curtain. He walked over. The figure did not move. It lay there like a bundle of wet clothes. From its depths came the wheezing sound of one asleep. The pungent odor of his pipe must have penetrated the middle of his face—he saw a head disengage itself, sniff around, and glance up curiously at him.

The figure beside him began to move, slowly, as if life were just coming back to it. It stiffened up, and suddenly burst into a violent fit of coughing. It bent forward in half as if something in its body were trying to break its neck. The coughing suddenly ceased, as if it had been throttled, and he heard a wheezy, slippery voice ask for a cigarette. He handed him the whole pack.

"The curtain goes up on act one. In a little while I'll know the whole drama of his life," he thought eagerly.

The man lit a cigarette and puffed deeply on it. "Lousy weathe', ain't it?"

He sniffed. He swept the back of his hand quickly across his nose, and then wiped his hand on his trouser-leg.

The lower part of his face was hidden in the darkness. This verbal enlightenment sounded so hollow, so bereft of sense, that, for a moment, he questioned whether this man knew or realized that he was there, standing over him. His voice was cracked, and his lips moved slowly, as if they were swollen.

"Ain't she pourin' though!" He spat viciously into the street. It landed: a pool of white saliva flagellated by the angry downpour of rain. "Yuh don't know what th' Bulletin says about it, do yuh buddy?"

"No. But I guess it'll clear up soon."

"Th' hell it will." He seemed to chew the words. "It ain't clearin' up t'night."

"You seem pretty sure that it won't."

"Sure, I'm sure. I've bin out in dis sort of weathe' all me life. I oughta know awright when it's gonna clear up and when it ain't. It ain't t'night."

"Then, why did you want to know

what the papers said?"

He chuckled under his breath. "Aw, jest fer the fun of it. Those guys in City Hall never never guess it right anyhow." He continued to chuckle. He looked out into the street after a moment: silent and serious.

The light from an opposite store suddenly threw a blare of whiteness in their direction, revealing the sordid hole this man had chosen for shelter. It was the vestibule of an old iron-foundry. The younger man, aroused by a sense of curiosity, stared at him.

The old man's eyes were half closed, and, continually blinking, as if he had just walked into a lighted room after being asleep for a long time. His thin face was furrowed with many deep lines. His wet jacket hung on him, loose, tattered, and dirty. He stood up and stretched himself. His coat sleeves came up to his wrists. Whenever he put his hands down, it seemed as if they would fall out of his sleeves. They were red and horny, the skin looked like the peeled scales of a boiled pink salmon.

"Lis'sen son . . ." He swallowed hard. "I'm sorta hungry. I ain't askin' fer much. Jest a dime. I ain't ate since yesteday." All this was said quickly as if he wanted to get it over with.

He was disappointed. This man evidently did not want to make a theatric of his life.

"How much do you want?" He asked gruffly, digging his hand into his pocket.

"Jest a dime. Fer coffee and soup." He whined.

#### episode IX

He was curious and anxious to know more about this man. Questions leaped on his tongue. What did he do? Where did he go? How, and what did he eat? What was his youth like? Did he have children? Did he ever think of going to bed with a woman?

"These questions will flatter him," he thought. "My interest in his personal

## Borderlines—continued

tragedies will make him feel vain."

Aloud he said: "How did you ever get yourself into such a terrible mess, mister? An old man like yourself ought to be on easy street, riding around in a car and be a big shot in politics. Tell me . . . just what happened to you?"

The old man eyed him for a second. He noticed a flash pass quickly through the old man's eyes. A flash that expired just as quickly. When he looked again, he merely beheld the same watery and lifeless eyes.

"Nothin' . . ."

The old man choked over the word. He turned on his heels, hunched up his thin shoulders, and shuffled off down the crooked street.

"Hey! There! Here's your dime!" He shouted after the old man. But he did not turn around. The mist closed over him as if he had stepped into an ocean of thin smoke.

He looked after the retreating figure of the old man: a black shadow against the gray of the cloudy street.

episode X

"He resents sincerity," he mumbled to himself. "He has converted all of his attitudes into whimpering reflexes."

episode XI

The man's water-soaked shoes made an empty flapping noise in the quiet street. He seemed to raise his feet with painful efforts as he limped away . . .

episode XII

"I unnerved him because he realized that I wasn't impressed with his acting. Misery to him is no longer a conscious thing, but a mere stagnated habit."

episode XIII

The old man's head was bowed down between his shoulders. He walked off with it bent down, as if the rain were trying to break his neck.

episode XIV

"His feeling of suffering has so demoralized him, that it can impress only his mind now. It has no effect on his body. His pain is part of a dream he has committed to memory years ago."

episode XV

Only a faint flapping noise came from the place where he last saw the old man. So faint that it hardly was audible to his ears.

. . . He buttoned his coat, for it was beginning to rain again, and after a futile attempt to peer through the darkness, ambled off in the opposite direction.

## DIRGE

ELDORA VAN BUREN

It was another just such a Monday  
They buried the six dead.  
And we all stood around  
Over the stillness of the  
Open earth, and moaned.  
And no one heard or felt  
The fresh wind and the thunder.

Turn the fallow under,  
We cannot bear the sere and hollow  
For the ghastly fears they teach.

The vessel that brimmed with hope,  
Full of swelling bubbles,  
Somebody turned upside down.  
Above us, Heaven,  
Below us, Hell,  
And in between the gravity of each  
Would tear apart.

Tombstones are such heavy,  
Reckless things  
To signal dust.

## Great Aunt Nora Dean

Nora Dean was a red woman.  
Her mouth was scarlet as a crushed begonia,  
And her hair coiled in a rope of flame about her head.  
When it rained, or if the sky was grey, her eyes smoldered,  
But in the sunshine they were brighter than burnished copper.  
Her hands were slim and unquiet as butterflies,  
And her voice throaty as caroled bells.  
She was made for marriage and motherhood,  
But when Dennis Hearne married Florry Alard  
Who was insipid as skimmed milk,  
And as useless as a withered flower,  
Nora sought the little folks in the orphanage.  
There in her liquid, fruity voice she sang the children to sleep,  
Pretending they were the dream children of her heart.

And

So today in looking down  
Upon her paste-board face,  
I see a mask of wounded pride,  
A lonely desert place.

## Great Great Aunt Claire

She saw the world in sixty-five,  
They say in eighty-four,  
That she was fairer than the rose  
That bloomed beside the door.

A soft sweet scented dusky thing  
With melting pansy eyes,  
And hair the sheen of thrush's wing,  
Catching the June sunrise.

Her smile was timid of the night,  
Her slender ringless hand,  
Held lightly in her billowed lap.  
A painted ivory fan.

A stranger came by in the dusk  
Piping an Irish tune,  
He spilled his love down at her feet,  
Beneath the spring's new moon.

He sang of dreams beneath the skies;  
The gypsy road from town,  
He taught her how to count the stars  
When evening sun went down.

## From the Family Album—continued

He took her white untarnished heart  
And placed it in his keeping,  
But when the apple blossoms fell,  
He left her to her weeping.

She watched the hills, she watched the sun,  
She faded with the rose,  
When winter came it wrapped her bed,  
With swirling icy snows.

### "Old Miss" Who Was Queer in Her Head

Three score of years she walked her gibbering way  
About the town's most crowded thoroughfare,  
Above her old and carmined face her hair  
Was dyed, and cut in youthful disarray.  
Dressed like a painted doll put on display,  
She minced and teetered down the street with care;  
A gaudy bird within the noisy square,  
Seeking lone pleasure from life's matinee.

But when she died, they hid her gay desire;  
The bright blue beads, bangles and shining rings,  
They clothed her withered form in black attire,  
And smoothed her hair to closely folded wings;  
But one who loved her came, with fond satire,  
And decked her throat with beads on scarlet strings.

### Divorce

After twenty years of marriage to great Uncle Gusty  
Who ate pickles and onions for supper,  
Aunt Rowena put on her hat and went to Oklahoma to raise hogs.  
"If I've got to live with pigs," she said,  
"Give me the four legged kind."

But Uncle Gusty only chuckled in his red beard,  
And patted Sniff on the head.  
"What's a woman to an airedale, anyhow?" he said.  
"Besides a dog don't care how many  
Pickles and onions you eat."

### Affinity

Though Uncle Jem wed bright eyed Carthage Gale,  
And kept her picture in a silver frame,  
The night he died so goes the olden tale,  
He smiled at her and called her Molly Brame.



by Travis Tuck Jordan  
Great Great Grandmother McLynch

They say she was a second wife,  
Red-warm but cold as snow,  
With heart as changeless as the sea,  
When evening tide is low.  
She thought it weak for tenderness  
To creep into the heart,  
So locked her soul within a room  
And threw the key apart.  
And in the pew each Sunday morn  
She sat with haughty head,  
Not kneeling when the vows were sung  
Nor when the prayers were read.  
She never used a mellow tongue;  
No tender, soft caress,—  
Her voice was cold as winter rain  
Within a wilderness.  
No sinner went to her for prayer,  
No poor for charity,  
No little child with trusting eyes,  
Ran laughing to her knee.  
And so for lack of tolerance  
Within her frosty heart,  
Her life was like the rattle of  
An empty apple cart.

MOTH WINGS  
ARTHUR E. DUBOIS

Funny World!

Funny things, funny people, funny ideas tickling me beneath my ribs,  
Mussing my hair like wind beneath my skull-hat,  
Bees in my bonnet.

I meant to damn you when I said you had no sense of humor.

I meant to say you couldn't laugh at me.

I meant to say that you had no red blood in your veins, no wild exulting  
joy in spring and lilacs, summer and rose, fall and goldenrod.

I meant to say that you had no laughter to throw about your shoulders  
when snow blows.

I meant to say that you live in a cellar with etiolated roses all the year  
around,

Roses that haven't the merit even of being pressed in a book of  
poetry and tied with a purpled pink ribbon.

I meant to say that you like your pale face and your wan roses, your black  
and white world with nothing but you in it,  
Not even a pedigreed pekinese.

I meant to say maybe that you're a wit,

And I'm afraid of you, as of a ghost or god,

Lone, lonely, omnipotent things from which I clothe myself,  
fearing to seem obscene.

## Moth Wings—continued

I meant to say perhaps your wit's so hot it drives you into cool cellars,  
cellars cool like tombs, and empty.

I meant to say, I guess, that you're a wit when I said you had no sense  
of humor.

And wit's a zenith, and its noon is paradox,  
And all its repartees and puns, its quips and quiddities, are high  
noonbeams or high moonbeams by which we are sun-struck  
or moon-struck,

Color-blinded,  
Blinded,  
Driven into cellars and caves,  
Houses and barns,  
Penitentiaries and nunneries, Ophelia.

And wit's middayish,  
And breakfasts and dinners are better than luncheons.  
And wit's middayish,  
And has no shadows or perspectives.  
And wit's middayish,  
And what I was yesterday only too clearly.

The sun or moon is bigger when it hugs the hills and trees than  
when it gleams alone, regally smug, in the sky.  
And if I reach for a moon I'd rather it was a big moon.

A vision of judgment is wit,  
And heaven or hell is its locale beyond earth,  
Beyond heart's desire.  
And I hate heaven and hell,  
High noons and high moons,  
Ghosts and witches and howling bitches.

I meant to damn you when I said you had no sense of humor.

And humor's an horizon, full of setting suns and rising moons,  
setting moons and rising suns,  
A hoop of teepees when the Sioux are strong,  
A round of covered wagons when the arrows fly,  
A wedding ring or a circle of fire,  
A magic circle to keep witches out,  
And white whitemen.

It's Wardle's Christmas feast, and the poor relations are there  
with Pickwick and Winkle and Tupman and Snodgrass.

And I like the poor relations  
And Pickwick and Winkle and Tupman and Snodgrass  
And—cut me, Marxists, turn up your noses!—the  
Wardles

And—cut me, Greenwich Villagers, turn up your noses!  
Dickens when he's not too Cheeryble.

by Arthur E. DuBois

One can reach out toward horizons, but the sun at zenith blazes down like  
Babbitt in Peoria,  
    Uses big words, hurls tetragrammatons at one's head like  
        anathema,  
    Drives one to cover under trees and umbrellas,  
    In cellars and caves,  
    In houses and barns,  
    In penitentiaries and nunneries, Ophelia.  
        And there black is black and white is white  
        And the good are good and the bad are bad  
        And that's all there is Good Morning, Good night.

Wits tell me I am finite, that I have no dash of the infinite in me,  
    I who've read Shelley!  
Wits tell me I've no time to know Eternity in carnally,  
    I who've—

I meant to damn you when I said you had no sense of humor.  
I meant to call you a wit, and  
I hate wits.

But sometimes the blind know laughter.

Yes, Helen Keller, yes?

And the color-blind in their cellars, too, may chuckle now and then,  
    Laughing as through a glass?  
    Who in the cellar doesn't embarrass those upstairs?  
        Humor looks up, and wit looks down.  
    Who hasn't been downstairs?  
        There are furnaces to feed and coal to bin and bottles to  
        tote, and ashes.  
    Who hasn't been upstairs?  
        Pity is so general that everyone gets an invitation up one  
        day or another. Besides, there's so much tramping back  
        and forth on the hardwood floors, and the toys make  
        so much noise, that really one must complain in person.  
    Who hasn't been upstairs and down, upstairs and down, up and  
        down, and gotten perspective?  
    Who?  
    Who on a lower sphere isn't failing to keep the archangel of the  
        upper sphere from holding its stars in place?  
    Who?  
    Who isn't a cosmic humorist?  
    Who wouldn't put out the light, put out the light, put out the  
        light if dashing himself headlong into it would put it out?  
    Who doesn't ask for unblinding light, knowing the moon, knowing  
        the midnight, knowing a black-and-white world in cellars  
        and wheatfields, penitentiaries and churches, stock exchanges  
        and nunneries, Ophelia?  
    Who?  
    Who?

## Moth Wings—continued

And, after all, who has no sense of humor?

You, John G. Neihardt?

We have built wings for ourselves, I said, and Lindbergh has flown across the Atlantic on them, a lyric deed, a splendid wayfaring. I also said, The gray goose doesn't lose its head over our wings.

You, John Masfield?

Paris and Helen—Youth and Beauty against the world! Yet we all know that the most famous war of all time was fought for no human Helen, but to control that Channel.

You, William Wordsworth, late Poet-Laureate?

I, William, was a better friend to Samuel Taylor Coleridge than he was to himself or to me.

You, John Milton, lost in the dark?

Paradise is a place where Eve does not fret because the table is set and the meat, the meat getting cold.

What is a sense of humor, anyway?

An asbestos covering for charred moth-wings.

And what are wings to a moth if it wants the flame and cannot feel the flame, flying? What's heaven for?

I have heard stories, royal stories, funny stories from the regal funny past.

I have heard how Jimmy Whistler signed himself a butterfly

And I have heard how Edward VII's subjects sang, I'd be a Butterfly  
Sang it in the streets,  
Sang it in theatres,  
Sang it in music-halls,  
Sang it at home,  
Sang it wherever they went and didn't have to sing "God save the King."

I have heard how Edward the Seventh himself stood on a street-corner in the rain wishing for someone to talk to, and how he went to a ball,  
And Lillie Langtry was there,  
And Lillie Langtry wore a yellow tulle gown,

And over it was a wide-meshed gold fish-net,  
And in the meshes were dead butterflies,  
    All sizes,  
    All colors,  
    All dead.

And when she danced the butterflies were broken, and their  
    wings fell to the dusted ballroom floor,  
    All sizes,  
    All colors,  
    All dead.

And I have heard how the morning after the ball  
    Edward the Seventh himself stooped across the tinsel ballroom  
        filled with ghost perfumes from last night's dancers,  
        Filled with the morning-after and the night-before,  
    Stooped across the ballroom floor really, not in comic opera acting  
    How Edward the Seventh himself, whose funeral was grand  
        and who stooped with difficulty, stooped across the bare  
        ballroom the next morning,  
        Trying not to see himself in its polished floorwood,  
Picking up the wings of butterflies fallen from Lillie Langtry's yellow  
    tulle gown,  
        All colors,  
        All sizes,  
        All dead.

Have I heard stories of the royal funny past,  
    How Edward the Seventh's subjects sang "T'd be a Butterfly"  
        when they didn't sing "God save the King,"  
    And how Edward the Seventh himself picked up butterfly wings  
        from Lillie Langtry's yellow tulle gown-  
Have I heard funny stories!

(And Lillie Langtry was banished from the Court of St. James  
    when she took to the stage.  
Yes! Players were vagabonds, and so much for sequels.  
Yet that's not the whole of the story either.  
She came to America, and—)

I meant to damn you when I said you had no sense of humor.  
But after all who has no sense of humor?  
Who?

I!

Hey, Time!  
Time!  
Get the hell outta here-  
Keep your hands off. You wouldn't stay for me.  
I, too, can reap. I've sown Eternity  
In a funny world,  
Funny things, funny people, funny ideas tickling me beneath my  
    ribs.



# TRUNCATIONS

*'The time has come,' the Walrus said,  
'To talk of many things:  
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—  
Of cabbages—and kings—  
And why the sea is boiling hot—  
And whether pigs have wings.'*

—LEWIS CARROLL

Of course it is impossible that we understand fully the nature of the mail coming into our contemporaries' offices, but we are probably safe in assuming that it, like ours, contains a number of requests from libraries to be placed on free subscription lists, "as we wish to preserve the magazine for posterity". For this flattery in conceding that the magazine merits preservation for posterity, we are eternally grateful; but it strikes us as queer that libraries, which are essentially culturally endowed, do not find it possible to support ventures of this sort, particularly when those same libraries do find it possible in many cases to purchase paid anthologies merely because a local society matron with influence has a poem therein. We think we speak for all "little" magazines when we say this. We have no false ideas of our own importance. Perhaps FANTASY—or any other poetic venture—is worth preservation and perhaps it isn't. That is for the individual to decide; naturally we think it is, but we may be prejudiced. Our only consolation, however, is that we are supported in our conceit by the endorsement of Harvard, Brown, and other university and public libraries who felt it worthwhile to order complete files. To these latter we apologize for any unkind remarks we may have made concerning libraries—remarks which may have been construed too generally. Our difference is only with the libraries that wish to preserve us for posterity—bless them!

—but not at the expense of seventy-five cents. (A number of magazines, be it said, are now offering this special concession of a seventy-five cent subscription to libraries.) They are willing to *preserve us for posterity* but are not willing to assist the magazine in *carrying on into posterity*. It is, in our opinion, an unhappy posterity that is not worth seventy-five cents . . . Fred Miller writes that with his next issue *Blast* turns into a quarterly. It will remain a magazine of proletarian short stories, although a little revolutionary verse is to be admitted, and perhaps some Marxist criticism. The address, in case you have forgotten, remains 55 Mt. Hope Place, New York, N. Y. . . . James Neill Northe must surely have accomplished the ultimate in the poetry world with two full newspaper pages of original poetry constituting an anniversary number of *Warp and Woof* . . . We have never found ourselves so entertainingly sold as by the interesting catalogue, *Along the North Wall*, recently sent us. Among other things we learned from it was the existence of a versified autobiography of Rossetti, of which we had never known before . . . *Golden Verse* is to appear soon from 2109 South 6th Street, Philadelphia, Penna. . . . From five stories published in these pages last year, Mr. O'Brien has honoured four with a listing among his best stories of the year. Meridel Le Sueur and Alfred Morang wrote three-star stories; Clifford Bragdon and Karlton Kelm were awarded two . . .

## PERMIT ME VOYAGE

By JAMES AGEE

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## REVIEWS---Poetry and Prose

Gladys McDow Hibbett has written in *Winds of Memory* (Poetry Publishers—63 pages) a number of delicate lyrics, many of which sing the praises of the Southland. She does not aim at great orchestral effects, but is content with a slim line of melody and achieves some pleasing rhymes. Mrs. Hibbett's publisher, by the way, turns out very nice verse volumes, of which this is not the least. Four illustrations by Antoinette Rhett further enhance the book's beauty.

*Salvation* (B. C. Hagglund—40 pages) is another H. H. Lewis brochure in the poet's angriest vein. Though purists will find something to decry in this worker-poet's technical capabilities, they cannot deny that he has an important message—and that his is the most powerful voice among the workingclass militants today. A few of his narrative bits sound like the early Sandburg, but, generally speaking, have a savagery the Chicago poet never puts into his work. The first poem is an effective presentation of what the Machine has done to the Worker.

This issue we appear to be dealing with fine bindings. And particularly in dealing with *Shanghaied* (Black Cat Press—22 pages) do we find it difficult to confine ourselves to orthodox book reviewing. *Shanghaied* is a very brief tale of the waterfront, written in a vivid manner by Robert White Wirtz.

If at times the author does slip out of character, the climax itself is a smashing one. Physically, the book is most attractive, printed on a peach-beige tinted paper and using a Bodoni typeface. The title page is perfection itself.

The first collection of William Saroyan's short stories, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (Random House—270 pages), is bound to be disturbing to a number of its readers. Saroyan does none of the things you expect him to do, even in a period of great experimentation with the short story. Yet, in a strange manner, he is satisfying.

William Saroyan holds to no technical rules. In a witty and sparkling preface, he gives his formula. *Do not pay any attention to the rules other people make.* That's rule one, and rule two: *Forget Edgar Allan Poe and O. Henry and write the kind of stories you feel like writing. Forget everybody who ever wrote anything.* (Rule three is off the subject, but perhaps as effective as any other for short story writing. *Learn to typewrite, so you can turn out stories as fast as Zane Grey.*)

Mr. Saroyan, in spite of his frequent mention of literary personalities, has rather successfully forgotten *everybody who ever wrote anything*. Notwithstanding the odious nature of comparisons, we say in all fairness to the originality of Mr. Saroyan's talent that, al-



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though he sometimes shows *traces* of other influence, he can be said to be indebted to only one other writer—Sherwood Anderson. Apart from a certain stylistic similarity, he is obsessed with some of Mr. Anderson's problems, notably those relating to the machine and the mechanization of man—a theme which he handles effectively.

*He knew that he was lost in it, he writes, and that they were taking out the insides of him and putting in a complicated mass of wheels and springs and hammers and levers, a piece of junk that worked precisely, doing a specific thing over and over again, precisely.*



It is passages such as the above that make the preface a bit unfortunate, witty as it is; for its very wittiness belies the tone of much of the remainder of the book. Beneath the flippancy is a depth of thought entirely unexpected. True, there are other flashes of humour, but the humour is usually Swiftian, carrying with it a mockery of all things, not sparing himself. The book, in other words, gives us more than the preface promises.

Saroyan thinks deeply. Particularly is this true in "Seventy Thousand Assyrians", probably the best story of the collection. His problems are simply life and death, but not the life and death,

the mortality and immortality of objective writers. For Saroyan there is a death in laughter, a death in prostitution. He is filled with the exaltation of being alive, yet he has no fear of death. Again he writes: *That year many men were weeping from their sleep. I used to laugh about this. It was such a startling thing that I used to laugh. The worst that can happen to any of us, I used to laugh, is death. It is a small thing. Why are you men weeping?*

So laughter too sounds all through the book. He is disgusted in a carnal adventure because "there was no laughter—no sound of strong, godly evil, no laughter." It is the same theme which motivates "Laughter", in which a school-boy is asked to laugh for a full hour by a teacher in whose classroom he has carelessly laughed. This story of an unhappy substitute teacher and an unwitting boy is deeply moving. But it is not until we reach "Sleep in Unheavenly Peace"—as bitter and mocking as its title—that we know how savage Saroyan's laughter can be.

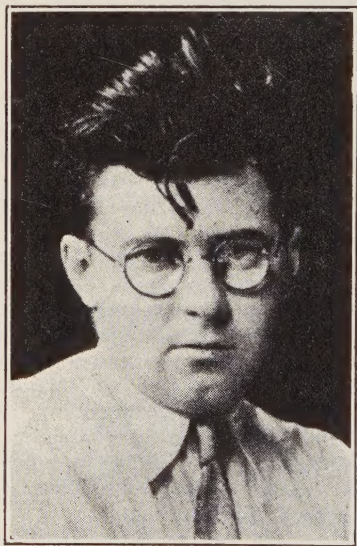
The author is a man of thought and much beauty of expression. Some critics have said he is conceited—deplorably so—which is, of course, no criticism at all, since all artists are essentially conceited. The very idea of submitting manuscript to a magazine or of hanging a picture is evidence of belief in one's creation. If we didn't ourselves think it good, would we subject it to another's judgment?

Mr. Saroyan writes effortlessly, easily, fitting well into his understanding of the short story medium. It would be a shame to bridle Mr. Saroyan with too many rules. They might only serve to break his spirit, and he succeeds too well without them.

The publishers have, by the way, turned out a beautiful job from the standpoint of format. As producers of the finest books for general consumption being distributed in this country, they have singularly honoured Mr. Saroyan by making his their first volume of original short stories. And Mr. Saroyan has not failed them.

The sixteen short stories of James T. Farrell's collected under the title *Calico Shoes* (The Vanguard Press—303 pages) are as far removed from the beforementioned pieces by Saroyan as they can well be. Saroyan's interest is largely in himself; Farrell figures in no way in his tales. He obtrudes few personal observations into his series of stories—a series which constitutes a panorama of the Chicago streets.

Not for nothing has Farrell been called our most uncompromising realist. He is, beyond all doubt, the most brutal of contemporary American writers. Even that late arrival, Benjamin Appel—and certainly James M. Cain—cannot equal him at this type of narrative.



We hear much of the warped mirrors held up to life by our uncompromising realists. One wonders, though, when reading the undeniable truth embodied in Farrell's naked prose, whether the mirror itself isn't accurate enough and only the lives reflected warped. For Farrell's scenes and conversations are truth itself; there is nothing we have not seen and heard ourselves on street corners. He knows Chicago as few writers know it; we do not require a biographical note of the author to tell us this. And more than this he knows

youth, adolescence, the sometimes frustrated, but oftener expressed, yearnings of sex.

His dialogue of fifteen-year-olds as expressed in "The Scarecrow"—is reportorial in its exactitude. This tale of a group of high school fraternity youngsters and their preoccupation with sex, and the pathetic figure of the scarecrow herself, a little drab who might have been lifted from Thomas Burke, is singularly effective. The same feeling for language is felt in "Helen, I Love You", this time dealing with youths still younger.

The extremes of Farrell's talent can be well seen in two stories of the collection, "Just Boys" and "A Casual Incident". Both stories deal with homosexuality, one boldly and the other subtly; and it is perhaps an evidence of greater talent that the latter story is the better of the two. "A Front-page Story" shows another facet of the author's talent—a story which arrives nowhere, but which is nevertheless satisfying and deeply tragic in its appeal. It is the story of poor Ruth Summer who, in her life, was one undistinguished student out of five thousand; but, after her drowning, became not only a front-page story, but an embarrassment to all the University officials. And how, through this exploiting, *all the fruitless dignity and courage of her life was betrayed, even after her death.*

We cannot but wonder though at the mordant quirk which caused Farrell to preface some of his work with gentle quotations from James Whitcomb Riley and Stevenson. We wonder how, in the light of Farrell's revelations, we can ever "be as happy as kings"—one of his quoted bits.

We feel that too often realists are mere *poseurs*, who realize that there are those to whom the sordid story will always have an appeal. With Farrell, we can say as with no other, there is not a trace of the faker. Farrell is a singularly honest scribe with the ability to set down in hard, bold words life as he has observed it on the streets of Chicago.